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ABSTRACT

This newsletter provides a summary of the documentation available on the activities connected with the Unterrichtsmethode English (UME) Project, an investigation of methods for teaching English as a second language, conducted from 1965 to 1970. The documents listed and described cover general reports; details of the material-method system; material design and instructional materials; activities; subordinate studies on instructional aims, content, forms of English teaching; and investigations concerning vocabulary, grammatical structures, subjects to be learned, and learning activities. Availability of the reports is indicated. (VM)

December 1971

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COMPLETED PROJECT

Project Title: Teaching Method English (UME)

Carried out at: The Institute of Educational Psychology,
Stockholm School of Education

Project Leader: Carl Henrik von Mentzer

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTATION

The UME Project was carried out during the period 1.8.1965 - 31.10.1970. A brief account of its aims and structure has been given in an earlier issue of SRN (1966:27).

The object of this issue is merely to provide a summary review of the relatively comprehensive documentation on the subject of the activities connected with the project. The summary is divided into sections, each of which deals with a particular theme, but within each such section the titles are listed without reference to any special system. In the case of every title a specification is given, except when the information is stated in the title, of its principal contents and general character as well as of where it is available and how it may be obtained.

1. General

A compiled and practically complete account of the progress of the project and its results is to be found in Rapport från pedagogiska institutionen Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, nummer 49, november 1970: "Projektet UME. Sammanfattande verksamhetsberättelse. Textdelen" (Report from The Institute of Educational Psychology Stockholm School of Education, No. 49, November 1970: The UME Project. Summary Report of Activities. Text). The report, which contains 106 pages, can be ordered from Stockholm School of Education.

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To the summary report ("Text") are attached 67 appendices covering some 600 pages. The appendices are presented in two large files per set. The appendices consist of sub-reports, minutes and other source material relevant to the project, including all the titles referred to in this issue. Only ten copies of the complete set of appendices have been produced. Reference copies of the activities report including all appendices have been deposited with the schools of education in Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg, Uppsala and Umeå as well as with the National Board of Education (L4). A selection of sub-reports considered to be of special interest have been collected in Rapport från Pedagogiska institutionen Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm, nummer 50, november 1970:

Tio delstudier från UME-projektet. En antologi med exempel på problem och metoder i ett 'system'-inriktat forsknings- och utvecklingsarbete.

(Report from The Institute of Educational Psychology, Stockholm School of Education, No. 50, November 1970:

Ten Studies from the UME Project. An Anthology of Examples of Problems and Methods in R & D Work aiming at a 'System').

The anthology runs to 109 pages and can be ordered from the Stockholm School of Education. Copies for reference have been distributed to the Schools of Education in Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg, Uppsala and Umeå as well as to the National Board of Education (L4).

2. The Material-Method System

One of the principal aims of the project was to draw up concrete specified directives (form and content) for a so-called material-method system (MMS) for the subject English in the 7th school year. The result is reported in:

Programhandling över ett material-metod-system för engelska årskurs 7 (UME-MMS). I. Textdelen. (Stencil, december 1970).

(Programme for a Material-Method System in English for the

Seventh School Year. Part I. Text. Stencil, December 1970). The programme also includes a drawing section, of which only 12 copies have been made.

The part concerned with text consists of 40 pages, that concerned with drawing 76 pages. The textual part contains a description of the organization of the material-method system, its components (hardware and software) method of operation and how it should be used. In the part devoted to drawing a specification is given of the contents in terms of components (software).

Copies for reference of both parts are available at the Schools of Education in Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg, Uppsala and Umeå as well as at the National Board of Education (L4). Spare copies of the textual part can be ordered from the Stockholm School of Education.

3. The Prototype Material

The directive for the project laid down that the material-method system should be tried out by means of experimentation on models. In order to carry out such experiments, a so-called prototype module, constituting a 14-day section of UME-MMS adapted for the purposes of experimentation, was constructed within the project. The material, which includes all the elements necessary in the MMS context, was produced in a final version for use by about 150 pupils. In this connection certain components were produced in single examples (hardware).

A complete set of all the material produced (including a 16mm sound tracked film, nine gramophone records, 19 magnetic tape cassettes, 30 booklets containing text as well as administrative material) was deposited with the National Board of Education (L4). Surplus copies of various components (software) are available at Stockholm School of Education.

The electronic part of the hardware, which was also produced within the project, consists of a central unit and 80 pupil stations. This part has also been handed over to the National Board of Education.

Inventories and instructions for use are kept with the materials.

4. Activities

Following successive revisions and the addition of further material, the prototype material was tested in three series of experiments. An account of the planning, execution and results is given in three separate reports:

Hagalundsförsöket (The Hagalund Experiment), stencil, November 1967, Inst. Educ., Stockholm Sch. of Educ., 13 pp.

Andra försöket (The Second Experiment), stencil, August 1968, Inst. Educ., Stockholm Sch. of Educ., 15 pp.

Tredje gången gillt (Third Time Lucky), stencil, January 1970, Inst. Educ., Stockholm Sch. of Educ., 20 pp.

A summary of press comments, radio programmes and other reactions associated with the final series of experiments is included in the report:

"Kejsarens nya kläder" (The Emperor's New Clothes), stencil, January 1970, Inst. Educ., Stockholm Sch. of Educ., 15 pp.

Surplus copies of these reports are available from the Stockholm School of Education. They are also included in the appendices section of the activities report as appendices Nos 56-59 (see above). The report "Third Time Lucky" is also to be found in the anthology "Ten Studies from the UME Project" (see above).

5. Subordinate Studies concerned with the Aims and Content of Instruction in English

During the course of the project a series of more or less independent special investigation has been carried out. Most of these have been described in separate sub-reports. Unfortunately not a single surplus copy of these titles remains, but they are included without exception in the appendices section of the activities report (see above). In some cases they are also to be found in the anthology "Ten Studies from the UME Project" (see above). In what follows reference is made for each title to the appendix number and, where applicable, to the relevant section of the anthology.

5.1 Investigations concerning vocabulary

"Ett centralt förråd av ord....?" (A Central Vocabulary) (March 1967, Appendix 44)

A stocktaking, examination and categorization of the "centrality" of English words against the background of their occurrence in textbooks, recommendations by experts and frequency vocabularies.

"Elevernas inläring av engelska ord i årskurs 7" (The Pupils' Learning of English Words in the Seventh Year) (November 1967, Appendix 48, included in the anthology)

An investigation into the pupils' English vocabulary (quantitative) at the beginning and the end of the seventh year. A distinction has been drawn between "active" and "passive" command. Very considerable differences between individuals have been shown.

"Formuleringen av testfrågor för mätning av ordbehärskning i främmande språk" (The Formulation of Test Questions for Assessing the Command of Words in Foreign Languages) (March 1967, Appendix 47, included in the anthology)

A poll of expert opinions on the suitability of various types of items for assessing "active" and "passive" command of words respectively.

5.2 Investigations concerning grammatical structures

"En undersökning av elevernas behärskning av grammatiska färdigheter i årskurs 7" (An Investigation concerning Seventh Year Pupils' Proficiency in Grammar) (March 1967, Appendix 52)
A pilot study for

"En undersökning av elevernas behärskning av grammatiska färdigheter i årskurs 7" (An Investigation concerning Seventh Year Pupils' Proficiency in Grammar) (October 1967, Appendix 53, included in the anthology)

An investigation into the pupils' command of selected elements of grammar at the beginning and the end of the seventh year.

"Vilka är de angelägnaste 'struktur'-övningarna för engelska i årskurs?" (What are the Most Suitable Exercises in Grammatical Constructions in English for Pupils of the Seventh Year?) (February 1969, Appendix 54)

A poll covering lecturers in methodology, senior teachers of English, student teachers, etc., on the subject of constructions or elements of grammar considered most suitable for instruction at the above-mentioned level.

5.3 Investigations concerning subjects to be learned

"Enkla, vardagliga situationer" (Simple, Everyday Situations) (March 1967, Appendix 49)

The listing and systemization of the occurrence of situations requiring speech-conversation-discussion in seventh year textbooks. An account is given of the nature of the exercises as well as of their scope.

"Vilka behov av engelsk språkfärdighet upplever svenskar?" (What Need of Proficiency in English do Swedes Feel?) (January 1968, Appendix 43, included in the anthology)

A summary of a laudatur thesis by Peter Ahlquist. Gives an account of self-experienced needs of Swedes (18-80 years of age, nationally

representative selection) to speak, read, write and understand spoken English.

Distinctions are drawn between the different contexts in which such needs are felt, how often they are experienced, the degree of the satisfaction of such needs individually experienced. Amongst other things the report takes account of sex, age and educational background.

"Begreppet 'realia' i undervisningen av moderna språk i Sverige"
(The Conception of Practical Subjects in the Teaching of Modern Languages in Sweden) (April 1967, Appendix 50, included in the anthology)

A study of standpoints and arguments.

"Enkätundersökning 'Fakta och realia'" (Poll on Facts and Practical Subjects) (February 1970, Appendix 51)

Assessments by lecturers in methodology and senior teachers as to the forms of practical subjects found most suitable for teaching on the English courses for seventh year pupils.

"Sammanfattning av 'Intresseundersökningen'" (Summary of 'The Interest Investigation') (September 1968, Appendix 55, included in the anthology)

A description of pupils' spontaneous preferences in various spheres of interest as well as a listing of combinations of interest (2-, 3-,) and a statistically maximum coverage of the interests of the population. Advanced computer techniques have been used in the calculations.

6. Subordinate Studies on the Forms of English Teaching, etc.

6.1 Investigations concerning individualization and differentiation

"16 teser" (Sixteen Views) (January 1969, Appendix 39, included in the anthology)

The assessments by a number of "experts" of concrete interpretations

of certain formulations in the curriculum: the logical agreement of the interpretations with the curriculum, their practical reasonability and their applicability.

"Lagoma dosen" (Suitable Doses) (July 1969, Appendix 40, included in the anthology)

An experimental study of the relationship between the scope of the material to be learned and the ascertainable retention of the material learned. A comparison between pupil categories having different capacities for learning. The most important result: for every capacity level there seems to be an optimal dosage of material to be learned. If this is exceeded, retention diminishes.

6.2 Investigations concerning learning activities

"Elevaktiviteter och inläringssituationer vid engelskundervisning i årskurs 7" (Pupil Activities and Learning Situations in the Teaching of English in the Seventh Year) (July 1966, Appendix 41, included in the anthology)

The distribution of the individual "average pupil's" time for instruction in English during the School Year (7th Year) into various activities, defined in relation to the formulations of the curriculum.

"Hur bör inlärningsaktiviteterna kvantitativt fördela sig över undervisningstiden i engelska, årskurs 7?" (How Should Learning Activities be Distributed Quantitatively during the Time Allotted for English Instruction in the Seventh Year) (March 1967, Appendix 42)

Against the background of the investigations most recently referred to, experts on methodology and others have stated in questionnaires their views as to how time for exercises "ought" to be used for various learning activities: reading, speaking, listening, writing.

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